

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JANET
IRVINE

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Grand Junction, Colorado resident Janet Irvine for her tireless efforts to maintain the morale of our troops overseas, and to better her Grand Junction community. Through the volunteer organization AdoptaPlatoon, she sends her homemade cookies to soldiers overseas, and keeps a regular correspondence with many of them.

Janet began her efforts to help our troops in 1999, when she joined AdoptaPlatoon, a volunteer group that links citizens to soldiers and platoons in need of support, and began sending her homemade cookies to small groups of soldiers. Over time, more and more troops from different platoons heard about Janet's delicious cookies, and now she regularly keeps seventy-five to one hundred-fifty troops supplied with cookies.

Recently, the availability of email to troops has increased the frequency with which Janet can correspond with them. In response to her dedication, a platoon stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan flew the flag over Fort Apache in her honor on March 12, 2003. Janet works to encourage others to serve the troops by talking to classes at area schools.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the selfless dedication and commitment Janet Irvine has demonstrated to our troops before this body of Congress and this nation. Her efforts to brighten the lives of our troops overseas are truly remarkable. I sincerely thank her for her efforts and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

RECOGNITION OF THE DAVILA
FAMILY

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Davila Family, a family that has contributed to the San Antonio community for 100 years. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant impact that this family has made on San Antonio for a century.

In 1904, the Davila Family opened its first business, a small grocery store, in San Antonio's Westside. This laid the foundation for a long and fruitful relationship with the community. Frank Davila Sr. and his wife, Mary Louise, opened this store at the corner of El Paso and Colorado Streets, the heart of the Westside.

Over time, this little community grocery store grew and evolved with the city. The family-owned operation grew into four grocery stores and the very popular Davila's and The Derby Drive-Ins. This expansion blossomed under the skillful guidance of Rodolfo Davila Sr. and his wife Delia.

With each new generation of Davilas, the family enterprise has continued to find new

ways to serve the community. In 1955, Rodolfo Davila Jr. opened the Davila Pharmacy four blocks from the original Davila Food Store. Now, the pharmacy is run by the fourth generation of the Davila Family, Rudy III and Rosette. They have become a vital component of the Westside by providing important healthcare services to their neighbors.

I am proud to celebrate the on-going tradition of the Davila Family and I value the impact that they have had on individual San Antonians' lives for a century. I wish them many blessings for continued success and strength as our beautiful city continues to grow and change. There is no doubt that the Davila Family will continue to thrive and evolve along with San Antonio, maintaining a legacy that will be remembered and appreciated for generations.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MIGRA-
TORY BIRD TREATY REFORM
ACT OF 2004: MARCH 31, 2004

HON. WAYNE T. GILCHREST

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 1, 2004

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to reform the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) to clarify that human introduced exotic avian species are not covered by the provisions of this landmark law.

The United States is currently a party to four international treaties to protect and conserve populations of migratory birds. Two years after the signing of the first treaty with Great Britain, Congress enacted the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. This act is our domestic implementing law and it statutorily commits this Nation to the proper management of certain families and species of birds.

After reviewing these treaties, it is clear that the list of covered species is not exhaustive, there is an inconsistency between migratory and nonmigratory birds and no distinction is made between exotic and native species.

Despite this fact, for over 80 years, there has never been a debate over whether exotic species should be protected under this act. Federal wildlife authorities have consistently treated exotic birds as falling outside of the provisions of the MBTA.

However, three years ago, a U.S. District Court of Appeals Judge, in the Hill v. Norton case turned this policy on its head by ruling that exotic mute swans, which are native to Europe and Asia, are covered because they are in the same avian family as native tundra and trumpeter swans.

As a result, neither the States nor the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can effectively manage mute swans. This species contributes to the degradation of Chesapeake Bay habitats by consuming large amounts of submerged aquatic vegetation and has destroyed nests and young of Maryland-stated listed native colonial waterbirds: least terns and black skimmers. The population of exotic mute swans has dramatically increased in the Chesapeake Bay from five birds that escaped captivity in 1962 to more than 3,600 today. There are more than 14,000 mute swans living in the Atlantic flyway.

As a result of this Federal court decision, an argument can now be made to apply the

MBTA provisions to other introduced, feral populations of exotic birds, such as, Eurasian collared doves, house sparrows, English starlings, Muscovy ducks, pigeons and a host of other species. These species were introduced by humans after the enactment of the 1918 Act and to varying degrees they are extremely destructive to the ecosystems in which they reside. Pigeons, or rock doves, are alone responsible for up to \$1.1 billion annually in damages to private and public property. They are the single most destructive bird in the United States.

On December 16th of last year, my Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans conducted an oversight hearing on exotic bird species and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. At that hearing, a diverse group of witnesses testified that Congress must reform the 1918 statute. For instance, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service testified that "affording the protection of the MBTA to introduced birds that are not native to the United States is ecologically unsound, contrary to the stated purposes of the MBTA and contrary to efforts by the Federal government to control invasive species".

It is my firm belief that it makes absolutely no sense to spend millions of dollars trying to control nonnative invasive species like the snakehead, brown tree snake, nutria, mitten crab, asian carp and zebra mussels, while at the same time expending precious resources to achieve the same conservation standards afforded native species under the MBTA for introduced avian species. States are ready to work with Federal and local governments to control populations of exotic birds. Following this hearing, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents all 50 States, submitted a statement indicating that "The Association would strongly support congressional intervention to clarify that certain exotic species of birds are not covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act".

Exotic, invasive species are having a huge impact on this Nation's native wildlife and fisheries, economic interests, infrastructure and human health. In fact, it has been estimated they are costing our economy about \$100 billion each year.

Mr. Speaker, I have carefully read the testimony and concluded that we can not idly sit by and allow exotic species to undermine the fundamental core of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which is to conserve native species. My bill is a simple common sense solution. It will restore a nearly century-old policy that reserves the application of the MBTA to native species. It will again allow Federal and State wildlife biologists to effectively manage exotic species at levels that do not conflict with the Federal and State obligations to conserve native species and habitats.

My bill has been endorsed by a number of governmental, conservation and environmental groups including the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the American Bird Conservancy, the Izaak Walton League, the Maryland Ornithological Society, Environmental Defense, the Nature Conservancy and the National Wildlife Federation. I urge my colleagues to join with me in support of the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004.